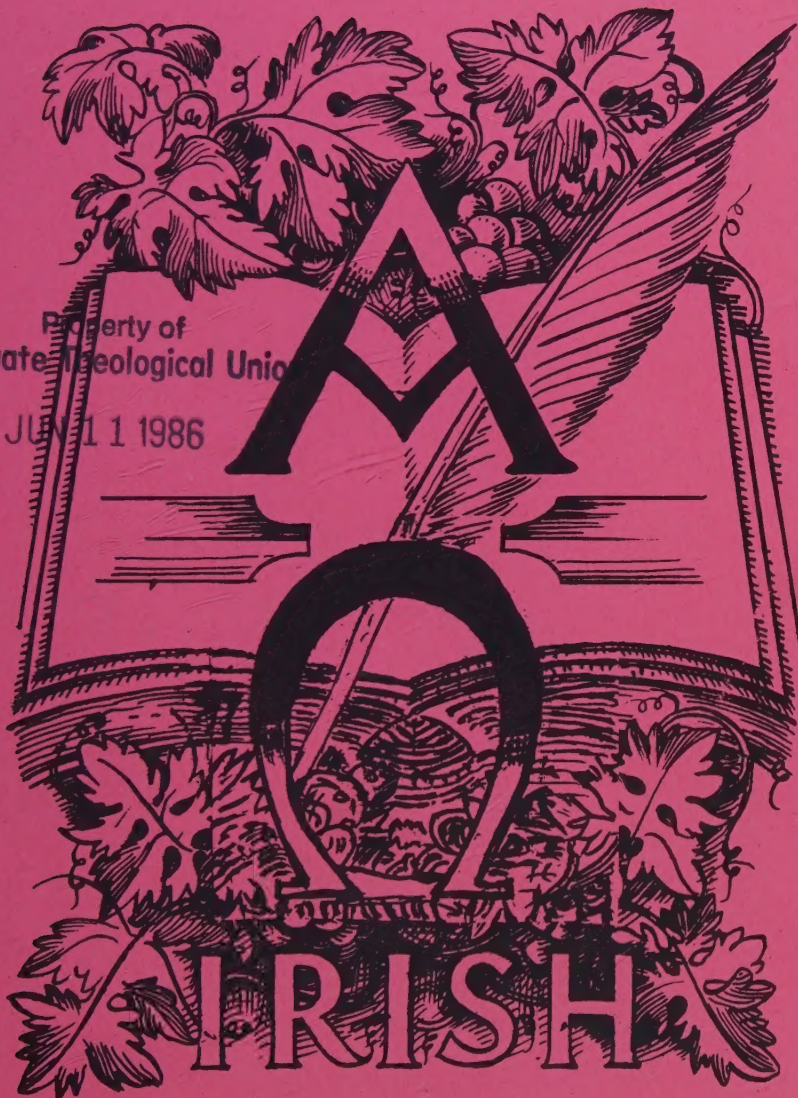


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THE CONCLUSION OF MATTHEW'S GOSPEL:
SOME LITERARY-CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS.

David Hill.

For the last fifty years and more research on the final paragraph of Matthew's Gospel has been dominated by the investigative methods which have been foremost in those decades, viz. Form-criticism and the closely-related discipline of Gattungskritik (the search for a literary genre or prototype). The results of the application of these heuristic methods to Matt. 28.16-20 have been very varied, and the range of possibilities offered for the understanding of the paragraph seems to be due, in part, to the inventive imaginations of the researchers and, in part, to the inadequacy or inappropriateness of the methods employed.

A short history of the search for the form or Gattung of Matt. 28.16-20 will reveal some odd and disquieting features. We begin with the "fathers" of New Testament form-critical study, Rudolf Bultmann and Martin Dibelius. Bultmann concentrates on the reference to baptism in v.19b and finds the form or prototype of the paragraph in the "cultic legend". "The last appearance of Jesus in Matthew 28:16-20 is a sort of cult legend in virtue of the appended instruction to baptize". This, however, is to focus too narrowly on the single command to baptize and also to do less than justice to the context of the whole pericope. Dibelius is of the opinion that Matt. 28.16-20 exemplifies a Hellenistic revelatory figure,² but, not only does this view neglect the Old Testament allusions (verbal and genre), it also leads to the unacceptably weak conclusion that vs.19-20a form a "commission to preach."

L. Brun,³ C.H. Dodd,⁴ and, more more recently, J.E. Alsup⁵ find in Matt.28.16-18a all but one of the elements which go to make up a typical "resurrection appearance" and vs.18b-20 are simply lumped together as a "commissioning." But this approach surely reverses the Matthean emphasis: he focuses on 18b-20 and uses vs. 16-19a to set the scene (on the mountain-associated in Matthew with teaching more than with revelation) and introduce the characters (Jesus and the eleven disciples). Otto Michel in his

notable essay on "The Conclusion of Matthew's Gospel"⁶ discovers in the pericope a christological reshaping of Dan. 7.13-14, an enthronement hymn with the elements of exaltation, presentation (i.e. announcement of exaltation) and enthronization (i.e. handing over of sovereignty), but the first and third of these elements are not really to be found in the passage: they may be implied but they are not actually present. Johannes Munck offers as the appropriate Gattung the farewell or departure speech, as found in the Old Testament and in post biblical Jewish literature: but Jesus is not bidding his disciples farewell: rather he is assuring them of his abiding presence! Wolfgang Trilling⁸ believes that Matt. 28.16-20 exemplifies an Old Testament "speech of God", but unfortunately he is not able to offer any one text that contains all the elements of this proposed Gattung.

B.J. Malina⁹ tries to explain Matthew's concluding paragraph in terms of an "official decree" as found in 2 Chron.36.23: 'Thus says Cyrus of Persia, "The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the Lord his God be with him. Let him go up"'. Drawing some further support from Gen.45.9-11, Malina argues that the literary form of the verse from 2 Chron. (which closes the Jewish Scriptures) is similar to that of the final section of Matthew and that the latter text is patterned on the former one. This literary form contains four elements: messenger-formula, narrative, command and motivation. Three criticism of this suggestion may be made: the Old Testament parallels do not give anything of comparable significance with the Matthean commissioning; the motivation element in 2 Chron.36.23 is not logically and structurally autonomous, as it clearly is in Matthew; and, thirdly, to say that the "messenger-formula" element is refashioned as narrative introduction to Jesus' decree is to admit a serious lack of correspondence at a critical point. Hubert Frankemoelle¹⁰ also seeks a prototype in 2 Chron.36.23 but he labels his Gattung as "covenant formula" with five elements: preamble (Matt.28.16-17), previous history

(v.18), declaration of principle (v.19a), specification of details (vs.19b-20a) and curse or blessing (v.20b). This comparison is forced and unconvincing: for example, v.18b, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me (= 'previous history') clearly concerns the present. What is being stressed is the fact that Jesus now possesses authority from God.

Recently, in a long list of Old Testament passages, twenty-seven in all, a literary form has been identified which is defined as a divine delegation of power or a "divine commissioning", composed of the following elements: introduction, confrontation, reaction, commission, protest, reassurance and conclusion. All these elements are found in nearly all the twenty-seven Old Testament passages investigated, except the reaction and the protest: both are found in only five commissioning accounts. Applying the results of his analysis to Matt.28.16-20 B.J. Hubbard¹¹ finds the following elements of the commission-form: introduction (v.16); confrontation (v.17a); reaction (V.17b); confirmation (v.18); commission (vs.19-20a) and reassurance (v.20b). Several points may be made in reference to this thesis. First, it could be argued that the 'commissioning' Gattung has not been demonstrated absolutely (i.e. in its seven elements) from the Old Testament passages, but it should be noted that nine of the possible thirty-seven instances of the commission-form in the New Testament have all seven of the constitutive elements,¹² although the "protest" and the "conclusion" are lacking in the case of Matt.28.16-20. Secondly, if it is claimed that the "conclusion" - in the form of a statement that the disciples acted as they had been instructed - is omitted (as in Isa.6 and 49.1-6; Jer.1.1-10) because the affirmation of the permanent presence of Jesus is a more appropriate conclusion to the Gospel as a whole, from both the dramatic and the theological points of view, we are nevertheless forced to admit that one element (or two, if we count the "conclusion") is missing from the "commissioning" Gattung, of which there are nine complete examples in the New Testament. In the third place, we would be inclined to ask, with J.P. Meier,¹³ whether there is any special commission-form over against the general form of an angelophany or theophany: it may well

be that the best description one could give of the overall genre of Matthew's concluding pericope lies in the direction of Old Testament theophany traditions, traditions which have been carefully redacted by the evangelist himself.

This short review of the Gattungskritik of Matt. 28.16-20 suggests that this method of seeking to understand the passage distracts from analysis of the pericope itself: it has succeeded only in forcing the text into artificial and preconceived moulds. It may be that a quite different approach - based on the literary structure of the text itself - will produce more profitable interpretive possibilities. To that we now turn.

A Fresh Approach

In his book Die literarische Kunst im Matthäus-Evangelium 14 Paul Gaechter observed that concentric structuring seems to be a Matthean stylistic device. A powerfully convincing example is Matt. 6:25-34 where four concentric rings cluster around v.29:

A.v.25: 'do not be anxious' (mē merimnate)

B.v.26: 'your heavenly Father cares (trephei)

C.v.27: 'which of you by being anxious' (merimnōn)

D.v.28 'lilies of the field (agrou) grow; Why are you anxious' (ti merimnate)

Centre v.29: Legitimation of A/A¹ - i.e. in view of God's activity 'to be anxious' (merimnan) is unnecessary.

D¹ v.30: 'God clothes the grass of the field (agrou) will he not clothe (amphiennumai) you, men of little faith (oligopistoi)

C¹ v.31-2a: 'do not be anxious' (mē merimnēsete)

B¹ v.32b-33: 'your heavenly Father knows' your needs

A¹ v.34 'do not be anxious' (mē merimnēsete).

Another example is to be found in Matt. 19.16-22 where v.18b is framed by three concentric rings:

A.v.16: a person comes to (proselthōn) Jesus with a question as to how he might have (echō) eternal life

B.v.17a: if you want (theleis) to enter into life

C.v.17b: keep the commandments (tērēson tas entolas)

Centre v.18 Statement of commandments.

C¹ v.20 All these things (commands) I have kept (phulassō)

B¹ v.21 If you want (theleis) to be perfect (teleios)
A¹ v.22: the young man went away (apēlthen) grieving,
for he had (ēn echōn) many possessions.

Such evidence of concentric structuring in Matthew's Gospel makes it appropriate to ask if there is evidence of this stylistic device in all or part of the concluding paragraph, and, if there is, does it assist in any way our understanding of the passage.

Let us begin by analysing the "outer" or literary structure of the pericope and then its "inner" or thought-structure.

(a) Outer Structure Vs.16-18a are characterized by a brief and terse narrative style, whereas vs.18b-20 are structurally more complex. Vs. 19a, 19b and 20a each begin with a participle and thus display a rhythmic unity: vs.19a and 20a are both quite short clauses containing a participle followed by a verb+object. But between these two clauses we have v.19b which is noticeably longer, contains a predominance of nominal forms and has no participle/verb construction.

Thus we appear to have a triplet: the outer verses (19a, 20a) frame the centre (19b). Moreover, the triplet is itself framed by vs.18b and 20b, which serves as an inclusio: these two clauses are independent indicative statements which are bound grammatically to the centre by "therefore" (oun) and by "and lo" (kai idou) and are tied to each other by the use of the adjective "all" (pas): pasa in 18b, panta in 19a and 20a and pasas in 20b.

(b) Inner Structure. Vs. 16-18a do not function autonomously: they serve rather as an introduction to Jesus' speech in 18b-20. The brevity of the narrative setting underlines the fact that Matthew wishes to focus his conclusion not on an appearance of Jesus but on what he says to the disciples.

Traditionally vs. 18b-20 have been divided into three parts: v.18b, declaration of authority possessed; vs. 19-20a, missionary command; v.20b, word of assurance. The thrust of vs.18b-20 varies as one or other of these parts is emphasised. But can we determine the intended emphasis? Again we examine the text itself.

v.18b: the content of this clause is independent of the following verses: Jesus declares that his absolute authority is from the Father: the words recall the "son of man" image in Dan 7.14 (LXX) which provides the idea of an everlasting authority over the nations of the earth. v.19a: Jesus gives the command to "make disciples" (mathēteuein, cf. 13.52 and 27.57) and in v.20a a disciple is defined as one who keeps all Jesus' injunctions or instructions (cf. 7.24 and 26). The third clause, v.19b, departs from the theme of disciple-making. The concern is not with the disciples' activity so much as its theological foundation - baptism in the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit. Accepting the Father as Lord of over all, the Son as the chosen recipient of this authority and the Spirit who mediates the presence and the power of both is requisite to becoming a disciple: circumcision, as the sign of belonging to a people or community, is replaced by baptism. It would seem that the baptismal command is the structural centre and the theological base for the missionary commands in vs.19a and 20a.

v.20b: Jesus assures his disciples of his abiding presence (word of assurance). However, that Jesus' presence is already a reality is evident in v.18b, the declaration of authority. Thus v.20b in a sense reaffirms v.18b, both treating of Jesus' absolute authority. "The abiding rule of the Son of Man is expressed in Jesus' permanent presence with his disciples"¹⁵

The structure then of Matt.26.18b-20 illustrates concentric design:

- A edothē moi pasa exousia en ouranō kai epi tēs gēs (18b)
 B poreuthentes oun mathēteusate panta ta ethnē (19a)
 Centre baptizontes autous eis to onoma tou patros kai tou huiou kai tou hagiou pneumatos (19b)
 B¹ didaskontes autous tērein panta hosa eneteilamēn humin (20a)
 A¹ kai idou ego meth humōn eimi pasas tas hēmeras heōs tēs sunteleias tou aiōnos (20b)

Now the various parts of this traditional literary form (A + B + Centre + B¹ + A¹) are tied to each other by common structure or content. The centre can be isolated from what surrounds it and often contains the core statement. Also, the centre is usually tied most closely

to the outermost parts (A and A¹). Matt.6.25-34 (as set out above, with v.29 as Centre) exemplifies most cogently this structuring, and the conclusion of the Gospel fits well into this same literary form: v.19b is the Centre around which A (v.18b), A¹ (v.20b), B. (v.19a) and B¹ (v.20a) are arranged concentrically.

A and A¹ are related in the following respects:

- (a) they are simple declarative sentences,
- (b) they use substantives frequently,
- (c) the second half of each contains a prepositional phrase,
- (d) the words pas ("all") and ego ("I") are common to both,
- (e) both stress Jesus' possession or execution of authority.

Similarly, B and B¹ are related:

- (a) they begin with a participle followed by a verb,
- (b) they use verbs frequently,
- (c) pas ("all") is common to both,
- (d) both contain the missionary mandate.

V.19b is tied to A and A¹ (the outermost parts of the structure) by the frequent use of substantives and, most importantly, by its internal structure: huiou (Son) refers both to 18b and 20b; patros (Father) to 18b (Jesus' authority is from the Father); baptizontes (baptising) to 18b and 20b (baptism implies acceptance of the Father, Son and Spirit). One might even argue that the Holy Spirit is related to meth' humōn (with you) in 20b. At any rate, it seems clear that v.19b is the centre of our concentric structure.

The question now is: What conclusions can be formed on the basis of Matthew's use of concentric structure in the concluding pericope of his Gospel, a pericope which is widely regarded as the most significant one in the entire Gospel and considered by some to be the clue to the meaning and message of the whole. For instance, Otto Michel writes thus:

It is sufficient to say that the whole Gospel as written under this theological premise of Matt.28.18-20....In a way the conclusion goes back to the start and teaches us to understand

the whole Gospel, the story of Jesus, "from behind". Matt. 28:18-20 is the key to the understanding of the whole book.¹⁶

And very recently Hermann Hendrickx has put the matter in this way:

.....our study confirms the opinion of those scholars who hold that Mt 28:16-20 is a summary of the entire gospel. Indeed, Matthew's final paragraph recapitulates the following themes or ideas: the mountain as a place of Jesus' powerful teaching and revelation (verse 16); emphasis on the need for faith (verse 17); the extent of Jesus' authority (verse 18); the importance of discipleship, and its universal character (verse 19a); the need to 'regulate' the community (Gemeindeordnung; verse 19b), in this instance by means of baptism (verse 19b) and teaching (verse 20a); Jesus' permanent presence (verse 20b).¹⁷

If our structural analysis of the passage is correct, then Matt. 28:19b represents a statement that is absolutely central to this important final pericope. In that case, we are confirmed in our view that the concluding paragraph of the Gospel was probably entirely composed by Matthew himself, and there is no room at all for doubting the authenticity of the reference to baptism in the three-fold name: any appeal to Eusebius for the genuine text ("teaching them in my name", with no mention of baptism or of the Father, Son and Spirit) is out of the question.

Secondly, do Matt. 28:18b-20a form a concise statement of Matthean theology which binds together the imperative and indicative? Is the indicative central precisely because it is the foundation of discipleship? If our thesis is correct, the answer to these two questions must be in the affirmative and, in consequence, Matthew must no longer be labelled as primarily an evangelist of the imperative. Admittedly there is a high incidence of imperatives (in, for example, chapters 5-7 and 18), but even there phrases like Matt. 5:48b, "as your heavenly Father is perfect" and 6:25, "do not be anxious", show that the indicative

presumes the imperative. Moreover, Matt.28.18b-20 demonstrates how masterfully the writer can intertwine the indicative and the imperative. In 28. 18b and 20b for example, Matthew formulates - but does not exhaust - his christology. In 19a and 20a he expands his christology through use of imperatives. The disciples and the church are bound inseparably to Jesus who is both example and commissioner. The Matthean Christ cannot be separated from the earthly Jesus. It is this Jesus, says Matthew, who with the Father and in the Spirit is always present.

NOTES:

1. R. Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition (ET², Blackwell, Oxford: 1968), p.286, and cf.p.306.
2. M. Dibelius, From Tradition to Gospel, (ET, J. Clarke, London: 1971), pp.283-84.
3. L. Brun, Die Auferstehung Christi in der christlicher Überlieferung (Oslo-Giessen: 1925).
4. C.H. Dodd, "The Appearance of the Risen Christ: An Essay in Form-Criticism of the Gospels", in Studies in the Gospels (Festschrift for R.H. Lightfoot; ed. D.E. Nineham: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp.9-35.
5. J.E. Alsup, The Post-Resurrection Appearance Stories of the Gospel Tradition; A History of Tradition Analysis (SPCK, London: 1975), pp.239-65.
6. Originally published in German in Evan.Theol. 10 (1950), pp.16-26: now available in The Interpretation of Matthew, ed. G.N. Stanton (SPCK, London: 1983) pp.30-41.
7. J. Munck, "Discours d'adieu dans le Nouveau Testament et dans la littérature biblique", in Aux Sources de le tradition chrétienne (Festschrift for M. Goguel; Paris: 1950), pp.155-70.
8. W. Trilling, Das wahre Israel (Munich, 1964³), ad.loc.
9. B.J. Malina, "The Literary Structure and Form of Matt. xxviii. 16-20", NTS 17(1970-71), pp.87-103.
10. H. Frankemoelle, Jahwebund und Kirche Christi (Munster: 1974), pp.42-72 and 321-5.

11. B.J. Hubbard, The Matthean Redaction of a Primitive Apostolic Commissioning: An Exegesis of Matthew 28: 16-20 (Scholars Press, Missoula, Mont., 1974).
12. Cf. T.Y. Mullins, "New Testament Commission Forms, especially in Luke-Acts", JBL 95 (1976)pp.603-14.
13. J.P. Meier, Matthew (New Testament Message 3: M. Glazier, Wilmington, Del., 1980), pp.416-24, and cf. "Two Disputed questions in Matt.28.16-20", JBL 96 (1977) pp. 407-24.
14. Stuttgart, KBW: 1968².
15. Pheme Perkins, Resurrection: New Testament Witness and Contemporary Reflection, (G. Chapman, London: 1985) p.135.
16. O. Michel, op.cit, p.35.
17. H.Hendrickx, The Resurrection Narratives of the Gospels (rev.ed., G. Chapman, London: 1984) p.63. Cf. also Oscar Brooks, "Matt.xxviii. 16-20 and the Design of the First Gospel", JSNT 10 (1981) pp.2-18.

Psalms of Lament, while they have been described in detail in a number of ways, are broadly speaking those which express some agony of soul, whether of an individual or on behalf of the community. but embody within them either petition (such as the ubiquitous "How long O Lord? Wilt thou forget me for ever?" Ps.13:2 (1 EVV) or expressions of confidence in God such as Ps.6:10f. (9f.); or indeed both. My concern in this article is particularly with psalms which move from distress to confidence, and indeed with the transition itself. For here we have a problem of interpretation: for what reason do such transitions occur? Can we, indeed, know anything about the circumstances in which they occur? Can we account for the fact that they occur not just a few times, but frequently, and more or less according to a pattern? In what follows I propose to look critically at some suggested answers (one in particular) and offer some reflections of my own.

Answers to the question thus posed fall broadly into three categories, namely literary-critical answers, psychological explanations and answers which postulate the activity of a cultic functionary, usually thought of as a prophet, who uttered oracles which altered the mood of the worshippers. The last of these has certainly been the most influential, and we begin with it.

The Cult-Functionary Explanation.

The names most frequently associated with the theory of the cult-prophet are those of S. Mowinckel and A.R. Johnson.² In their studies the role of the prophet is much more extensive than the mere provision of oracles at crucial moments in certain psalms. Rather, they compose whole psalms, and indeed other compositions not now contained in the psalter, e.g. Habakkuk 3. The work of Mowinckel and Johnson constitutes a major contribution to answering the complex question about the relationship between psalmody and prophecy. That is a debate which we cannot enter here in any comprehensive way. It is important simply to notice that it forms the background to our particular question. That is, when we ask whether a transition from distress to confidence

within a given psalm may best be explained by appeal to a cult-prophet we are engaging with a whole approach to biblical psalmody and indeed to the prophetic literature which looks for explanations of literary phenomena in postulated cultic occasions. The approach is far-reaching and has affected Jeremiah and Isaiah 40-66 perhaps chiefly among the prophetic books.³ While our task is more limited than to offer a challenge to that whole system of interpretation, our point of concern is a not unimportant aspect of it, for the system referred to requires for its credibility such particular evidences as the prophetic "oracle" in certain psalms is often held to be.

Let us now outline in more detail what the nature of the proposal about prophetic oracles is. An example is afforded by Ps.6. Vv.7f.(6f.) picture the psalmist weary with his moaning, his eye "wasting away because of grief". Then suddenly, vv.9-11(8-10):

Depart from me all you workers of evil,
for the Lord has heard the sound of my weeping.
The Lord has heard my supplication:
The Lord accepts my prayer.
All my enemies shall be ashamed and sorely troubled;
they shall turn back, and be put to shame in a moment.

If the change of mood which happens here has been produced by the utterance of an oracle, it is clear that the oracle has not actually been included in the psalm. It must be regarded as falling between vv.8 and 9 (7 & 8). The majority of psalms which exhibit a change of mood such this one are similar in this respect, that an oracle is assumed to have been uttered though not recorded. Proponents of the cult-prophet theory can, however, point to certain psalms which do contain words which may lend substance to the theory. One such is Ps.12. This begins (vv.2-5)(1-4) with a protest against the prevalence of falsehood, drawing a cry for help from the psalmist. Then in v.6(5) we find:

"Because the poor are despoiled, because the needy groan, I will now arise," says the Lord;
"I will place him in the safety for which he longs".

There follow statements of confidence in the Lord's promises. Other more or less similar cases are Pss. 60:8-10(6-8) 85:9(8), 91:14-16.

It may seem, therefore, that we have two different categories of psalm before us: one in which the change of mood may be explained by an oracle, plain for all to see, and one in which it cannot, or not so readily at least. They should, however, all be viewed together. This is first of all because the theory in question has classically applied to both categories. It is true that some interpreters have⁴ been less confident and applied it only selectively. Where such selectivity occurs, however, it is not necessarily along the line of separation between psalms which contain oracles and those which do not. W.H. Bellinger, in a recent work on psalmody and prophecy, makes ad hoc decisions about the likelihood of spoken oracles, finding for it, for example, in Ps.31, but against it in Ps.57, where he thinks that the Psalmist's⁵ new certainty could simply have arisen from his faith. Such choices only raise the suspicion of subjectivity. In any case, we have already noticed that the oracle-theory is only a part of a broader general approach to the psalms, and the leading exponents of the theory have not been interested in merely partial explanations.

Indeed, the need to discover concrete evidence for the oracle-theory has been keenly felt by its advocates (just as it has been called for by its critics).⁶ The most influential attempt to do so was that of J. Begrich's "Das priesterliche Heilsorakel".⁷ It is worth spending a moment on his thesis, because it continues to be at the source of flirtation with the oracle-theory. His specific contribution was to identify in Isaiah 40-55 examples of the "priestly oracle of salvation", i.e. precisely the kind of oracle which is required to demonstrate the theory in question for the psalms. To give one example among many, Isa.49:7 is seen as a suitable response to the appeal of the psalmist in Ps.31:16-19 (15-18). This (or a similar statement) could, therefore, constitute the oracle which is deemed to have fallen between vv.19(18)

and 20 (19), where, following the lament pattern, statements of re-assurance begin.

Begrich's thesis, therefore, is that oracles used in the cult, though largely not preserved in the psalms, have been taken up by the prophet in Isaiah 40-55 for his purpose of announcing salvation to the Babylonian exiles.

While Begrich's view has been much quoted and widely influential,⁹ it is open to criticism on a number of counts. First, it may reasonably be objected that the language shared by the lament psalms and Isaiah 40-55 is merely the common coin of religious affirmation, the searching questions being one side of the coin and the prophetic assurances the other. Secondly, there is a serious question-mark beside Begrich's logic. As T.M. Raitt puts it:

First the evidence in Second Isaiah was used to solve a question in Psalms research. Then the same passages were taken as evidence of a cultic setting for the prophet's salvation-oracles. This is flagrant example of a circular or self-validating argument.¹⁰

The "evidence" for the priestly oracle in Isaiah is no evidence at all, because there is nothing in Isaiah to suggest the priestly origin of the statements cited. The argument is really a double argument from silence: the (almost complete) silence of the Psalms as to the oracle, and the silence of Isaiah 40-55 as to its cultic setting. A third objection (if more were needed) is that the alleged match between the gap in the Psalms and the affirmations in Isaiah 40-55 is not as satisfying as may appear at first glance. One of the assurances in the latter place has the plural address-form (e.g. 51:7-8), though Begrich's thesis is entirely in terms of the individual lament. More seriously, he has been "loosened up" by the prophet for his own purposes, meaning that it has in places expanded from an original one-liner into a second line (as in 41:10).¹¹ This is simply to illustrate that what has been found in Isaiah 40-55 does not, in the

end, even correspond to what was originally sought. The conclusion is inevitable that Begrich was dazzled by a promising theory- even to the extent of arguing that where one of Isaiah's "oracles" fails to find a corresponding psalm, the omission from the psalter is mere chance!¹²

Begrich, then, has not found the independent evidence which the oracle-theory requires. Is there such evidence in any other quarter? It is sometimes said that 2 Chr. 20:14-17 provides just such evidence. In this chapter King Jehoshaphat prays to God for deliverance on the occasion of an attack on Judah by an alliance of Moabites and Ammonites. His petition (vv.6-12) resembles statements found in many lament-psalms, emphasising the kingly power of God, his promises to his people and even their own faithful response, and appealing to God because of their apparently imminent defeat. The context of the prayer is a great assembly of the people of Judah. Such is, almost by definition, a "cultic" assembly; particular indications that this is so are the expression "seek the Lord" (typical for worship in Chr.), the proclamation of a fast (v.3), and the prayer itself. In the midst of this expectant assembly, and in direct response to Jehoshaphat's prayer, the Spirit of the Lord comes upon a Levite, Jahaziel-ben-Zechariah(v.14), who delivers a word from God, assuring the people of victory and indeed instructing them to adopt a particular vantage-point from which to observe God's victory (vv.15-17). Thanksgiving and praise are accordingly offered by all the people (vv.18f).

Superficially, this event looks very like those which Mowinckel, Johnson and others have sought as the Sitz-im-Leben of lament psalms. A cultic functionary gives a prophetic word of assurance following a lament-petition, and the mood of the people changes from fear to joy. However, there are two reasons why 2 Chr.20 does not provide the evidence needed to clinch the cult-prophet theory. The first lies in the nature of the occasion described in that place. Far from being one of the regular cultic assemblies of Israel(as per

Exod.23:14-17), it is a special event born of the impending crisis. Its particularity is reflected in Jehoshaphat's prayer (with its reference to Moab and Ammon, v.10) which thus distinguishes the prayer from the more generalized petitions of the lament-psalms. Neither the event itself nor the prayer offered, therefore, provides a real analogy with the situations postulated by the theories of Mowinckel, Johnson and others, which are precisely those of regular worship. The second reason why 2 Chr.20 is unsuitable as evidence for the Sitz-im-Leben of lament-Psalms is that Chronicles has a particular interest in the role of prophets in general, and Levites (like Jahaziel) in particular.¹³ The oracle here should be seen in the context of that special interest. This is not to say that the event described could not have happened, but the point illustrates again that, in seeking to solve a problem in Psalms-interpretation by appeal to what happens in a different kind of literature, one cannot ignore the special characteristics of the latter.

Before proceeding to other possible explanations of the change of mood in lament-psalms, I want to make just two more observations on the problems of the cultic-functionary explanation. The first is that the Psalms do not always follow the pattern which can make the theory look plausible. Pss.42 and 60 illustrate the point. Both these Psalms feature the phenomenon of the change of mood. Neither, however, has a single, definitive one. Ps.42 has a binary structure within which the Psalmist twice moves through gloomy thoughts to memories of God's goodness culminating in the refrain:

Hope in God, for I shall again praise him,
my help and my God, vv.6,12(5,11).

In Ps.60, likewise, the "oracle", vv.8-10(6-8), one of those which has been allegedly preserved, does not appear to have the desired effect, as the Psalmist's mood of rejection, expressed initially in v.1, survives it, v.12(10)! The renewed confidence comes only in v.14 (12). These Psalms make it extremely difficult to imagine what the event postulated by Mowinckel's theory

might actually have been like. Even in relation to Psalms which seem to fit it better, the idea of a cult-figure emerging, on cue, to say his lines (for he would presumably have been called upon each time the Psalm was used) strains credulity.¹⁴ In Pss.42 and 60 the imagination has either to admit defeat or devise absurdities.

The second (closing) observation on the cult-functionary theory is that it betrays little sensitivity to the literary poetic character of the Psalms, which is certainly at least part of the answer to the problem posed by the change of mood. The binary form and double climax of Ps.42, already noticed, is a function of literary artistry, not of any hypothetical Sitz-im-Leben. To show this in detail would require reference to a variety of Psalms. I shall confine myself to one, namely Ps.12. This too has been mentioned already, because it is one of those which possess a word of God which has seemed to some to be one of the elusive prophetic oracles required by Mowinckel's theory. However, P.C. Craigie has called attention in a way of understanding the words of God in terms of the meaning of this particular Psalm. He rightly points out that the Psalm is essentially about speech. Vv.2-5(1-4) are about the lying, flattering speech of the wicked. V.6(5) follows in stark and immediate contrasts, one of those utterances of God which are further described, v.7(6), as "pure". If the words of the wicked cannot be trusted, those of the LORD most certainly can. As Craigie insists the oracle of God can be adequately explained in terms of poetic device, and in general the literary quality which is one of the Psalmists' concerns.¹⁵

Other Explanations.

The main contenders offered in the history of scholarship as rivals to the cult-functionary theory are the literary-critical and the psychological explanations. The former need not delay us long. The juxtaposition of contradictory sentiments in the Psalms is rarely explained these days in terms of the diverse origins of the parts (as was done, for example, in the ICC commentary in the early part of this century).¹⁶

Such an approach could not in any case cope with what Mowinckel was at least trying to take seriously, namely the regularity with which certain kinds of jarring juxtaposition occur.

The psychological explanation is more interesting. Its leading advocate, Friedrich Heiler, believed that the act of praying itself brought about the assurance. As faith had led to prayer in the first instance so faith, in the context of prayer, issued in peace of mind. It hardly needs to be said that such experiences can and do happen in the life of the believer. However, there is an important difficulty here too if we attempt to explain the phenomena we have observed in the Psalms in this way. The difficulty is that it cannot explain the regular or repeated use of any given Psalm. Granted that a Psalm did originate in this way, it is already a "given", in its entirety, for any subsequent user. The psychological explanation would only be adequate if we could suppose that each reader or user reproduced the emotional experience, indeed the sequence of emotional experiences, of the author after him. Such is hardly true of the psychology of worship. We do not in fact, as worshippers, register the whole gamut of emotions from despair to joy within the few minutes it takes to read a Psalm - or at least we do not do so purely by virtue of reading it. To this difficulty may be added the observation that the psychological explanation may be felt not to handle easily the more or less regular pattern of the lament-Psalms. This, however, is a less important objection than the former one, since poets can indeed express their highly individual sentiments in regular or prescribed forms. If we reject the psychological explanation, however, we do so as an explanation of the lament-Psalms as a vehicle of regular (and at least in the case of community-laments, public) worship. This does not preclude the possibility of the original inspiration of an individual through a specific experience. It simply asks how that inspiration relates to the kind of usage of the Psalms which (presumably) has led to their collection together in a book.

A Different Suggestion.

Hitherto I have assumed that the Psalms are interesting not simply (indeed not even primarily) as the deposit of various individuals' experiences, but as the material used by people other than the authors in their worship and spirituality. Thus far, therefore, I have accepted the form-critical postulate of Gunkel, which also underlay Mowinckel's work. However, I do not wish, as they did, to locate the great majority of the Psalms in the corporate worship of the Jerusalem Temple. Some recent scholarship at least is looking again at the possibility of a variety of life-settings for the Psalms, including private meditation, family worship and indeed the range of situations thrown up by whatever kind of "pastoral"¹⁸ ministry may have been exercised in ancient Israel. This seems entirely healthy. I do not wish to claim or exclude any particular settings for the Psalms; many Psalms may have been usable in a variety of ways. What does seem to be important is that Psalms were brought to situations in order to assist worship.

Having said this I have already distanced myself from the major proposed explanations outlined above. In their different ways, both the psychological and the cult-functionary explanations saw the Psalms as emerging from worship; I wish to see them as being brought to it. That is to say, I want to see the Psalms as having their own coherence and completeness (which is denied by Mowinckel's view), and as having potency apart from their original and underlying inspiration (contra the psychological view), which potency is the very reason for their preservation.

How, then, are we to understand the jolting phenomenon of the change of mood in the Psalms of lament. The answer lies both in an observation drawn from biblical theology and in one drawn from the psychology of religion and spirituality. The theological category referred to is that of memory. The biblical writers know well the deficiencies of the worshipper's memory. The theme gains its fullest expression in Deuteronomy, where the tendency

of those who are satiated to forget God their benefactor is eloquently stated (Deut.8:11-20). The Psalmists know this too. The author of Psalm 73 sees, as did Deuteronomy, that memory has a moral dimension. Only when he comes before God in worship does he shed his misconceptions (vv.4-14) and see things once again as they really are (v.17). Here is a theology for the Psalms of lament. Their function is to draw the worshipper back to those settled convictions which are his, despite the challenges to them presented by circumstances and his own inconstancy. In giving expression to his doubts, fears and protests, they meet him in his disturbed state of mind and lead him through, or better back, to faith, understanding and equilibrium.

Such a view corresponds exactly with what seems to me to be actual experience or worship, again whether in a formal setting or in private spirituality. In fact, when we use Psalms, we do not switch on a range of emotions as we read. The interaction between Psalm and reader is not so mechanical. It cannot be uncommon to come to a Psalm of joy while feeling deep sadness, or indeed to a Psalmic expression of grief while elated. The discrepancy between what is real and what is felt can produce feelings of unreality and unease. Yet the nature of the process between Psalm and reader is genuine - if rightly understood. For there is indeed a correspondence between the sentiments expressed in the Psalm and the reader's experience. The sentiments are all those which are familiar to him. If they are not all his at the moment of reading, they are his in that they characterize his experience at one time or another. The Psalms gather up, perhaps in a stylized way, the whole range of the believer's experience with God, and provide a vehicle with which to express it. But they do more. For they can actually "lead" the Psalm-user's mood. It is in this sense that both the psychological and the cult-functionary theories have missed something special about the Psalms. They sought to explain the uncomfortably abrupt change of mood in terms of some cause either at the moment of composition or in the course of some "original" and unrepeatable worship-event. In each case

an explanation was imported into the Psalm (a conjectured original experience, a cult-figure) which failed to reckon with how Psalms actually work repeatedly in routine worship. The real explanation of the change of mood is precisely its potency to effect a change of mood in the user. As he engages with the Psalmist's experience, so he identifies, first with the expressions of fear, distrust etc., and then with the movement back to faith, as underlying convictions are reclaimed. It is clear that such an explanation is not incompatible with the belief that the Psalms were composed as the result of individuals' specific experiences. I have sought to show, however, that it is not enough to show how the Psalms originated, but also - and primarily - how they function in worship, since it was that function which led to their preservation, and which is of continuing interest to us today. The relation between the Psalmist's experience and the reader's is not automatic; the Psalm does not contain a blueprint. Nevertheless, those who gathered the Psalms together for the purpose of worship were well aware that the Psalms of lament, with their abrupt change of mood, required no other explanation or justification than their actual evocative power.

NOTES:

1. See W.H. Bellinger, Psalmody and Prophecy, Sheffield, JSOT, 1984, pp.22-24, and p.98, n.1.
2. S. Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel's Worship, Oxford, Blackwell, 1962, vol.II, pp.58-75; A.R. Johnson, The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel, Cardiff, Univ. of Wales, 1944; and The Cultic Prophet and Israel's Psalmody, same publisher, 1979.
3. On Jeremiah, H. Graf Reventlow, Liturgie und Prophetische Ich bei Jeremia, Gütersloh, Mohn, 1963, has expounded Jeremiah's so-called "Confessions" otherwise frequently seen as an outstanding example of personal devotion, as liturgical compositions. On the Book of Isaiah, cf. J.H. Eaton, Festal Drama in Deutero-Isaiah, London, SPCK, 1979.

4. A. Weiser seems to distinguish between a larger number of Psalms for which an oracle has been claimed and a smaller number for which the theory may be presumed to have been "proved true"; The Psalms, London, SCM, 1962, p.79.
5. Bellinger. op.cit. pp. 37,55.
6. Bellinger cites G. Quell (ThLz 81, 1956, cols. 401ff) and R. de Vaux (Ancient Israel, 1961, pp. 384ff.) as sceptics. Quell in particular calls for a historical, rather than purely form-critical, argument; op.cit., p.16.
7. ZAW 11 (1934), pp. 81-92.
8. Begrich, p.84.
9. See Bellinger, op.cit., 79-81, and his references there.
10. T.M. Raitt, A Theology of Exile, Philadelphia, Fortress, 1977, pp.154f.
11. Begrich, p.85.
12. Ibid. p.91.
13. Cf. H.G. M. Williamson, 1 and 2 Chronicles, London, Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1982, pp.30f.
14. Cf. M.D. Goulder's sceptical remarks, The Psalms of the Sons of Korah, Sheffield, JSOT, 1982, p.110.
15. P.C. Craigie, Psalms 1-50, Waco, Word Biblical Commentary, 1983, p.137.
16. C.A. and E.G. Briggs, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms I and II, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1906, 1907.
17. F. Heiler, Prayer: a Study in the History and Psychology of Religion, ET London, OUP, 1932.
18. Cf. W. Brueggemann, "Psalms and the Life of Faith A Suggested Typology of Function", JSOT 17(1980)pp.3-32.

Hamilton Moore.

The last thirty years have witnessed a revival of interest in apocalyptic and questions about its origin, characteristics and theological value have provoked lively debate. Apocalyptic had made a brief appearance at the turn of the century through J. Weiss and A. Schweitzer (1), and painstaking work was done by British scholars such as R.H. Charles and F.C. Burkitt on producing editions and interpretations of the apocalyptic texts (2), yet for decades that apocalyptic literature was continually ignored. Klaus Koch sketched those years in his book Ratlos vor der Apokalypik (English Translation, The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic; SBT 2/22; London: SCM 1972) and outlined the revival of theological and literary interest in apocalyptic since the war(3).

In his second chapter, 'The Apocalyptic Renaissance' Koch explains that the sudden turning to apocalyptic has been prompted only to a small extent by a fresh study of the texts, but gained its main, if indirect impetus, from the questionings of New Testament scholars and systematic theologians (4). He refers to two seminal writers, E. Käsemann and his essay on 'The Beginnings of Christian Theology' (1960) (5), which claimed 'apocalyptic....was the mother of all Christian theology' (6), and, in the field of systematic theology to Wolfhart Pannenberg, who in 1959 gave renewed importance to the apocalyptic concept of history for Christian theology in his essay 'Redemptive Event and History' (7). Anderson also affirms that this questioning referred to by Koch has arisen because the Bultmanian individualism appeared unsatisfactory to some theologians, who saw in apocalyptic, with its external, cosmic dimensions, a means of broadening the horizons to embrace the larger and indispensable concern with the justification of God's cause over His whole world. He further explains that another factor in this (8) renewed interest in apocalyptic was the study of the Qumran sect and its library, and the intensified research into the history and culture of Judaism and Christianity at the turn of the era (9). He states, "It is clear that at Qumran we are faced with a community which not only treasured apocalyptic works but was fired with apocalyptic

zeal and expectation. The members of this community thought of themselves as the final elect of God, chosen to purify the faith of their fathers through the trials of the Last Days, and engaged to that purpose in the eschatological warfare of the children of light with the children of darkness. Faced with the known existence of a priestly apocalyptic sect (10), roughly contemporaneous with Jesus and the early Church, scholars have been forced not only to revise previous estimates of the nature of late Judaism but to ask whether apocalypticism like that at Qumran (and not just the Judaism of the Pharisaic rabbis, with its focus on the Law) may not have exerted a considerable influence on the New Testament" (11).

D.S. Russell has suggested 'deeper reasons' for the revitalized concern and interest in apocalyptic. He refers to the similarity between the period of the 20th Century and the age of the apocalyptists, each being an age of crisis politically, socially, religiously, when such hopes and fears as are expressed in the apocalyptic writings come to the surface (12). Stephen Travis also mentions the 'sense of doom' felt by many in modern society today as a contributing factor (13).

The extent of the renewed interest in apocalyptic has been widespread. Käsemann's essay at once provoked a vigorous reaction from his German colleagues, particularly Ebeling and Fuchs. These essays, together with contributions by H.D. Betz, Frank M. Cross, David Freedman and Robert W. Funk were published as vol. 6 of the 'Journal for Theology and Church' in 1969 under the title 'Apocalypticism' (14).. Since then entire issues of Interpretation (1971,25), Review and Expositor (1975, Vol LXXII) have been devoted to the subject, as also has Vol 39 of the Catholic Biblical Quarterly (1977). Hundreds of articles have been produced and along with brief but important treatments like those of Koch and Morris (15), major works on apocalyptic have appeared in the publication of P.D. Hanson's 'The Dawn of Apocalyptic' (16) and Christopher Rowland's 'The Open Heaven' (17). Also the third impression of D.S. Russell's earlier work 'The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic' was printed in 1980 (18). Mention should also be made of the appearance of Hal Lindsey's 'The Late Great Planet Earth' (1970),

with its excess of 4,000,000 copies sold - a book which catapulted apocalyptic into its current popular vogue. Finally, Koch has demonstrated that interest in apocalyptic has not been confirmed just to theological circles but has shown itself also in the realm of art, literature and in philosophical thinking (19), and Travis reminds us that now in the days of polluted oceans and neutron bombs it has even become the common property of film critics and political commentators (20).

A survey of recent discussion demonstrates that among scholars a consensus has not yet been reached on many of the major issues in the study of apocalyptic. (This is reflected in the original title of Koch's book (which the English title neutralizes) Ratlos vor der Apokalyptik, 'at a loss when faced with apocalyptic'. Again a perusal of the symposium Apocalypticism, ed. R.W. Funk leads one to agree with the verdict of its editor (in the preface) that the cross winds and conflict in its pages indicates "the chaotic state of historical and theological scholarship where apocalypticism is concerned. Premises are rarely shared; definitions often diverge; significance is variously assessed." (21). In the light of this we must guard against undue dogmatism in particular areas of our subject.

1. Definition. The first major problem is to arrive at a satisfactory definition of apocalyptic itself. The term is derived from the Greek ἀποκάλυψις (Rev 1v1, 'revelation' or 'unveiling'), not directly, but from a second and narrower use of the word to describe literary compositions which resemble the book of Revelation. It is used generally of a group of writings most of which were composed in the last two centuries BC and in the first century AD, and also of the ideas and concepts that are found in this kind of literature (22). But it is 'our term' (23), derived from biblical scholarship, and not one which the ancients used, and there is no agreed list of apocalyptic books nor consensus as to exactly what the term denotes.

Attempts have been made to define apocalyptic by drawing up a list of its supposed characteristics or

features. Morris sees apocalyptic as characterized by revelation, particularly but not exclusively, of the end, by an angel to the hero of the book; strange symbolism; pessimism; the shaking of the foundations; the triumph of God; determinism; dualism; pseudonymity; a literary form; rewritten history; ethical teaching (although in the last resort the ethical imperative is not characteristic of the apocalyptists as it is of the prophets); prediction, and historical perspective (but with reservations). (24)

Koch also examines Hebrew and Aramaic apocalyptic writings and lists firstly the formal characteristics as, discourse cycles between the apocalyptic seer and his heavenly counterpart, usually over several chapters (these cycles are generally called visions revealing something about the destiny of mankind); spiritual turmoils of the seer as a result; paraenetic discourse which offer a kind of 'eschatological ethic'; pseudonymity; symbolism drawing upon a vast reservoir of ancient mythology, and a long literary development and composite character. Along with these formal characteristics Koch sees as typical moods and ideas - imminent expectation of the end, the cosmic catastrophe ushering in the end; the history of the world divided into fixed segments; an extensive angelology and demonology; a new salvation beyond the catastrophe, paradisaical in character, an act from the throne bringing this about; frequently a mediator with royal functions and the use of the catchword 'glory'. (25) Other lists could be given, (26) but for many today this method of defining apocalyptic is regarded as being unsatisfactory and inadequate (27).

Hanson takes a different approach and proposes a system that identifies three distinct levels which, while interrelated, betray individual peculiarities which should not be blurred. (28) First of all the term 'apocalyptic' designates a literary genre, which is one of the favoured media (but by no means the exclusive or dominant one) used by the apocalyptic writers. 'Apocalyptic eschatology' is neither a genre, nor a socio-religious movement, nor a system of thought, but rather a religious perspective, a way of viewing divine plans. It is a

perspective which is the exclusive property of no single religious or political party. It is a continuation of prophetic eschatology, the difference being in the degree to which divine plans and acts are interpreted as being effectual within the structure of mundane reality.

'Apocalypticism' cannot be identified with apocalyptic eschatology because the former includes sapientia material and material derived from Greek, Hellenistic and various Eastern sources. However, it can be said to be latent in apocalyptic eschatology and can grow out of the perspective it provides. 'Apocalypticism' refers to the symbolic universe in which an apocalyptic movement codifies its identity and interpretation of reality. This symbolic universe crystalizes around the perspective of apocalyptic eschatology which the movement adopts. Since the symbolic universe generated by different apocalyptic movements which differ from one another as a result of conditions surrounding the organic growth of the individual symbolic systems, it is not possible to give one formal cognitive definition of apocalypticism. Hanson believes that all ancient apocalyptic movements are characterized by (a) a particular type of social setting - group experience of alienation, and (b) a related group response - a new symbolic universe must replace that dominant in the social system responsible for the alienation. Through recourse to apocalyptic eschatology a group can maintain a sense of identity and a vision of its ultimate vindication.

Two more recent attempts at defining apocalyptic can be found in Christopher Rowland's 'The Open Heaven' and Stephen Travis' 'Christian Hope and The Future of Man.' Rowland takes as his starting point those writings generally acknowledged to be apocalypses (Daniel and Revelation and certain books with a similar outlook). On this basis he arrives at a preliminary definition. "What we are faced with in apocalyptic, therefore, is a type of religion whose distinguishing feature is a belief in direct revelation of the things of God which was mediated through dream, vision or divine intermediary" (29). He finally fastens on a fuller account of apocalyptic derived from the four types, the discussion of which is forbidden, in the Mishnah, 'what is above, what is beneath, what was before time, and what will be hereafter'. The

divine mysteries which are revealed through vision or some kind of immediate disclosure concern the heavenly scene, man and his world, past history and the future. Thus Rowland argues against the predominant opinion that apocalyptic is defined by a certain eschatological perspective. Yet for many he never successfully separates apocalyptic from prophecy or makes a convincing case for the "open heaven" as the sole distinguishing trait of apocalyptic (30).

Stephen Travis proposes that the question of definition be approached on several levels (a) Literary Genre. The term apocalyptic can be used to describe: Jewish and Christian books like the Revelation which purport by revelations through visions, dreams and angels to describe the heavenly world and God's plan for the future. However since there are writings which have 'apocalyptic' ideas but have different literary form, e.g. Test. of the Twelve Patriarchs, apocalyptic must also be defined in terms of (b) Doctrinal features. These Travis enumerates as pessimism about the course of history, dualism between God and Satan, between the earthly world and the heavenly world, between the present age and the age to come; predictions of future events leading to an imminent end of history; faith in the triumph of God; belief in resurrection and final judgement. Finally, apocalyptic should be defined in terms of (c) Sociological milieu. Travis, with an increasing number of other scholars suggests that what gives unity to such a diverse body of literature is the social and historical situation in which it is produced. The 'ethos' reflected in the literature may be a more important indication of its being 'apocalyptic' than its precise form or list of contents - although as we shall discover this is not all easy to determine. He concludes by confessing that we may never find a foolproof way of determining what literature is apocalyptic and what is not; but by using his proposed method of approach, he accepts, with caution, D.S. Russell's list (Daniel, the apocryphal 2 Esdras, fifteen non-canonical works and several of the Qumran Scrolls), plus certain OT passages, Mk. 13, II Thess. 2 and the Book of Revelation (31).

2. Origin and Milieu. The question of the origin and milieu of apocalyptic is another area in which great

diversity of opinion has been evident. Koch bemoans the fact that one is indeed faced with 'an unsurpassed jumble of opinions' (32). We shall consider first of all the suggestions of scholars about theological streams in the emerging apocalyptic outlook (33) and then the sitz im Leben of the apocalyptists themselves.

For many years it was usual to postulate that apocalyptic was a late foreign element in religion, transported from Persia and of little real worth as compared with Old Testament prophecy (34). One typical definition of apocalyptic runs thus, 'A type of religious thought which apparently originated in Zoroastrianism, the ancient Persian religion; taken over by Judaism in the exile and post-exilic periods.....' (35). Travis acknowledges parallels in Parseeism to several doctrines of apocalyptic, but believes that such ideas could have filtered through into Jewish thought after 539BC when Persian influence in Palestine was strong. He also affirms that some of the most crucial elements of Jewish apocalyptic - its pessimism about the present age, its expectation of an imminent end, its stern denial that all men will be saved - are not found in Parseeism and therefore, while it may have had some influence, it cannot have been the dominant factor (36). Baldwin has pointed out that Daniel has no reference to Satan, a remarkable omission if apocalyptic is derived from Persian eschatology (37). Again, the late sources for Zoroastrianism have often been overlooked (38).

H.D. Betz sees Jewish apocalyptic as one strand in a much wider movement in the Hellenistic world. Adopting a religio-historical approach he selects a fragment of tradition, taken from the vision of the bowls in Rev.16, concerning 'the angel of the waters', v4-7. From a survey of parallel ideas in Hellenistic and Oriental literature (particularly the hermetic fragment Kore Kosmu) he concludes that, 'Jewish, and subsequently Christian apocalypticism as well, cannot be understood from themselves or from the Old Testament alone, but must be seen and presented as peculiar expressions within the entire development of Hellenistic syncretism.' (39).

The influence on apocalyptic of ideas and expressions from the richly endowed field of Hellenism may have been underestimated. However, we need not postulate syncretist Hellenism as the necessary background of apocalyptic. A.Y.

Collins adopts the same approach and covers the same ground as Betz. He concludes that Kore Kosmu 50-70 is not of major significance for the interpretation of Rev. 16v4-7, and the two points which the texts have in common are not exclusively Hellenistic characteristics (see his references to Gen. 3v17 and Isa.24). He sees Betz's hypothesis as a helpful corrective of an approach which minimizes the impact of new historical circumstances and over-emphasises the continuity between prophecy and apocalypticism. But Collins asserts the history of religious approach must avoid over-emphasising the discontinuity and confining its interpretation to the perspective provided by the Hellenistic environment. Therefore he proposes a mediating approach and believes careful attention should be paid to both continuity and innovation (40). Hellenism may well have given apocalyptic some of its forms of expression, but it has yet to be shown that it was in any real sense determinative (41).

P.D. Hanson has made an important contribution to the study of the origins of apocalyptic (42). He maintains that both Persian and Hellenistic influences were late in coming, only after the essential character of apocalyptic was fully developed, and therefore were limited to peripheral embellishments. He has reaffirmed the earlier view of some scholars that apocalyptic developed from Old Testament prophecy. For Hanson certain exilic and post-exilic prophetic oracles are said to offer examples of 'proto-apocalyptic' eschatology. The later chapters of Isaiah as well as Ezekiel 40ff, Zechariah and Haggai, in Hanson's opinion, yield evidence of a conflict within the post-exilic community between hierocratic and visionary groups of control of the Jerusalemite cultus. On the basis of detailed exegesis of the oracles, particularly from Third Isaiah, he maintains that the visionaries lost the struggle and became so disillusioned that they despaired of seeking any kind of restoration by human initiative and looked to a direct intervention of God as the only basis of hope. Linked with this was their gradual despair of history as the area of divine activity. Thus among the disciples of Second Isaiah apocalyptic eschatology was born.

Bauckham believes that Hanson's postulation of a community struggle is speculative and the weakest part

of his thesis. It leads to a polarization of the prophetic tradition of Second Isaiah, Third Isaiah and Zechariah 9-14 on the one hand, and Ezekiel and Zechariah 1-8 on the other and does not do justice to the significance of the latter in the development of apocalyptic. Yet Bauckham is convinced that Hanson had shown in Is. 55-66, Zech. 9-14 that the transcendent eschatology which characterizes apocalyptic emerged in post-exilic prophecy, as an internal development in the Israelite prophetic tradition, in response to the historical conditions of the post-exilic community (43).

Von Rad refuses to see apocalyptic as a child of prophecy but argues for a development from the wisdom literature. He explains that both wisdom and apocalyptic literature are concerned not so much with Israel as a nation but with the individual and his place among all men; that wisdom's 'encyclopaedic interest' in such things as cosmology, astrology, biology, angelology reappears, for example, in 1 Enoch; both apocalyptic and wisdom have a deterministic view of history and are concerned with theodicy (44). It has long been known that a considerable part of wisdom tradition had penetrated apocalyptic (45), and this is generally acknowledged (46), but what is new in von Rad is his insistence on wisdom as its one and only root, and the denial of its connection with prophecy. Koch points out that what is difficult about this view is the apocalyptists' burning interest in eschatology, whereas there is an obvious lack of eschatological material in the major wisdom documents of the Old Testament and Apocrypha (47). Von Rad sought to explain the apocalyptists' deep interest in eschatology by affirming that wisdom, which tended toward the encyclopaedic, would surely be expected to develop a concern (probably a late one) with the Last Things. The problem is that, as Koch has explained, the eschatology "is not simply added on as one additional theme among many others, which the encyclopaedists can one day also come to include; it is the absolutely dominating centre, round which all other material - perhaps even 'encyclopaedic' material is grouped" (48).

Von Rad's claims about the contact of apocalyptic with wisdom have not remained undeveloped, however. Even if the type of wisdom which we find in Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Sirach seems far removed from the apocalyptists, similarities have been pointed out between apocalyptic and mantic wisdom (49) with its interpretation of dreams and receipt of visions.

In conclusion therefore we may say that it is difficult to be specific about the origins of apocalyptic because of our meagre knowledge of the religious currents of Judaism in the centuries following the exile. Perhaps we ought to recognise the probability of a more complex development in apocalyptic from earlier biblical traditions than is usually admitted.

3. Sitz Im Leben What of a sitz im Leben for apocalyptic? Do books with a community of ideas and spirit not have a common sociological starting point? That may be so, but the difficulty is from what evidence we have, it appears that during the period between 200 BC and 100 AD, when the mass of apocalyptic writings came into being, Israel had the appearance of anything but unity, whether in Palestine or in the Diaspora and, as Koch has pointed out, everyone of the groupings known to us have been suggested as the sitz im Leben of the apocalyptists! (50). He mentions Boussets 'obscure and simple people, far removed from the Jerusalem hierarchy and its theology'; a small class of highly learned sages, thoroughly familiar with the non-Israelite culture of their time (Russell, G. von Rad), (51); the possibility of a beginning in the Babylonian Diaspora or Persia (Eissfeldt, Russell, J.J. Collins); or on Palestinian soil either from the Essenes (Helgenfeldt's view), Hasidim (Ploeger, Hengel), Pharisees (Charles), or Zealots (Herford) (52).

One important clue to the 'life-setting' of apocalyptic is that it was, 'born of crisis - from the start....underground literature, the consolation of the persecuted' (53). The apocalyptists were 'the disenfranchised', 'men without power' (54). This has led to apocalyptic being linked with the Hasidim in the

2nd century BC, when the Hellenistic reforms and violent oppression by Antiochus IV Epiphanes created an overwhelming sense of alienation (55). Several writers echo Hengel's description of the "conventicle-like-segregation of the 'Pious' from the official cult community" (56). Significantly the rise of the Hasidim is hinted at in the animal-apocalypse in 1 Enoch 90 v 6ff, although this does not prove that this apocalypse was written in that circle.

Baldwin argues for the rise of apocalyptic in the catastrophe and crisis of the exile in the 6th century BC. She reasons, "If it be true that there is a connection between adversity and apocalyptic there could be no more likely time for it to come to fruition than the 6th century, when every visible expression of Israel's very existence collapses, and the shape of the future was completely unknown" (57). She finds support in F.M. Cross (58) and Hanson's views outlined earlier. She affirms that the prophetic books do have apocalyptic features eg. Is.24-27, Ezekiel and Zechariah. Mention is made of Hanson's view that the tension between vision and reality resulting in polarization at times of crisis reached its extreme in the late 6th century and again in the early 2nd century, (59). Therefore there is the possibility of what Travis calls, two 'high points' of apocalyptic literary activity - 550 to about 450 BC, and the period of upheaval provoked by Antiochus (the time of the Hasidim) (60).

Acceptance of a link between the Hasidic wise men and apocalyptic could explain its presence in later diverse movements descended from them (the Qumran sectarians and Pharisees). Yet there is much to be said for D.S. Russell's claim that the apocalyptic writers were to be found not in any one party within Judaism but throughout many parties, known and unknown, and among men who owed allegiance to no party at all.' (61). Apocalyptic may be better defined 'as more a mode of thought whose impact on Judaism cannot be narrowly defined on a secretarian basis, but is a way of looking at the world which could be shared by groups which may in other respects differ markedly on points of doctrine.' (62).

4. Theological Evaluation of Apocalyptic

Finally, we must comment on the theological evaluation of apocalyptic and its relationship to New Testament Christianity. Upon consideration it appears that much recent discussions has resulted in the judgment, whither explicitly or implicitly, that apocalyptic is a more or less degenerate form of Israel's faith. (63). Even Hanson, despite his strong argument for the continuity of prophecy and apocalyptic, still treats pre-exilic prophecy as the high point of Old Testament theology, from which apocalyptic is a regrettable decline, However much it may be an understandable development in post-exilic circumstances (64). For Rowley, we must not come to apocalyptic with 'literalistic minds', but read them in the light of the times from which they issued. He can find only an 'enduring message' in apocalyptic, a 'deeper relevance' and 'profound spiritual principles', true for every generation (65). Yet this is a great advance on the position of von Rad who believed that the apocalypticists had abandoned history, emptying it of meaning, in contrast to that of the prophetic view (God's action rooted in saving history) (66).

In most modern assessments of apocalyptic it is this wholly negative view of history attributed to it which is the reason for its denigration. Apocalyptic is said to be radically dualistic, pessimistic, deterministic and characterised solely by a transcendent eschatology. Yet Bauckham and Travis have demonstrated that a more positive assessment is possible. Bauckham argues that this totally negative assessment 1) Derives from generalizations on the basis of a selection of proof texts from the later apocalypses, closer to Persian dualism than those most influenced by Old Testament prophecy. 2) It betrays a lack of sympathy with the desperate circumstances of the apocalypticists and their problem of theodicy. 3) The apocalyptic view of history must be understood from its starting point in the post-exilic experience of history. It did not begin with a dogma that God cannot act in history but with "an empirical observation of God's relative absence from

history since the fall of Jerusalem". (4) God had acted in the past (Israel's history), hence they hope for His action in the future, though their present experience made the hope of total transformation the only appropriate expression of faith in a God who rules history. 5) The early apocalyptists may not have been so quietist as is normally supposed. 6) The viewpoint of history as predetermined is quite different from a pagan resignation to fate. 7) If the apocalyptists went beyond the prophets in asserting that the meaning of history cannot be found within history this is a gain not a loss for theology. A transcendent eschatology is required for a satisfactory theodicy. (67) Bauckham continues, "For the christian the validity of transcendent eschatology is in the last resort a problem of New Testament theology. While the apocalyptic hope was certainly modified by the historical event of Jesus Christ, the New Testament interprets this event as presupposing and even endorsing a transcendent eschatology of divine intervention, cosmic transformation and the transcendence of death" (68). Therefore a serious commitment to the New Testament revelation requires us to accept apocalyptic eschatology as essentially a theological advance.

5. Apocalyptic Jesus?

What was the relationship of Jesus and early Christianity to apocalyptic? Ever since Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer produced their picture of thoroughly apocalyptic Jesus there have been 'agonized attempts to save Jesus from apocalyptic' (69). In Käsemann's essay, which helped to spark off the renewed interest in apocalyptic, he argues that both John the Baptist and the early post-resurrection church were apocalyptic in outlook. Jesus was not an apocalyptist; He preached "the immediate nearness of God." Furthermore, the preaching of Jesus cannot really be described as theology. Primitive Jewish Christian apocalyptic thus became "the mother of all Christian theology" (70).

Travis points out that most of the scholars who have been critical of Käsemann have done so, not because they are unhappy with a non-apocalyptic Jesus, but because

he admits too much apocalyptic influence in the post-resurrection church. Travis believes that Kasemann is mistaken about a non-apocalyptic Jesus and makes reference to the numerous apocalyptic features in His teaching pointed out by James Dunn and other scholars (71). Again Travis maintains Kasemann's critics are wrong when they deny the importance of apocalyptic for Jesus' first followers. Rollins, for example, refers to Jewish apocalyptic's sense of the meaninglessness of history, and then contrasts it with the positive evaluation of history and of the world which arises from the early church's realised eschatology. He views the New Testament as 'the produce of a post-apocalypticism, rooted in the experience of Easter and Pentecost, which from the beginning represented a theological orientation in fundamental conflict with Jewish apocalypticism.' So the Church was delivered from follies of apocalyptic, and returned to the wiser ways of the prophets, with their affirmation that God discloses himself in present history (72). Travis points out that this method of unfavourably comparing apocalyptic on the one hand with Old Testament prophecy and New Testament realised eschatology on the other 'misconstrues the relationship between them. What Rollins calls the 'post-apocalypticism' of the New Testament does not arise from a rejection of apocalyptic and a reversion to a prophetic attitude, but rather from a recognition that the expectations of the apocalyptists have begun to find their fulfilment in Jesus.' (73) Yet Jesus and the New Testament writers did not simply take over Jewish apocalyptic unchanged. They modified it, because in Jesus apocalyptic expectations had become expectations-in-process-of-fulfilment. (74)

In conclusion it can be said that this chapter has demonstrated that there are still many unanswered questions and *differences* of scholarly opinion relating to apocalyptic. Much research still needs to be done. With Koch we can say, 'Through the attempts to grasp anew the obscure power of apocalyptic, a new movement has unmistakably entered theology, a movement which can be salutary if it brings a careful working out and evaluation in its train. If it does not, great will be the harm among theologians and non-theologians alike.' (75)

Notes

1. J. Weiss, Jesus Proclamation of the Kingdom of God, (ET London 1971); A. Schweitzer, "The Quest of the Historical Jesus" (1906; ET London 1911)
2. R.H. Charles, The Apocrypha & Pseudepigrapha of the OT (2 Vols, Oxford 1913); F.C. Burkitt, Jewish and Christian Apocalypses (1914, London); cf also the important two volumes on The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, J.H. Charlesworth, Ed. not available for this paper.
3. See chs 2,6-8
4. ibid, 13f
5. "The Beginnings of Christian Theology" in NT Questions for Today (ET, London 1969) 82-107, 108-137
6. op.cit. 40
7. "Redemptive Event and History", in Basic Questions in Theology (ET London 1970)
8. H. Anderson, "A Future for Apocalyptic" in Biblical Studies, W. Barclay Festschrift, (London 1976), 56-71
9. See also CBQ, Vol 39 (1977), 307
10. Morris considers it is going too far to describe the Covenanters as an apocalyptic sect, however deep their interest thereon: Apocalyptic (1972 IVP), 23
11. op.cit.
12. D.S. Russell, Apocalyptic: Ancient and Modern, (London 1978), 5.
13. S.H. Travis, Christian Hope and the Future of Man (IVP 1980), 25.
14. The last four essays represent part of a Symposium on "Apocalyptic Literature and Thought" of the SBL, 1967 (Ed F.M. Cross)
15. op.cit.
16. Fortress Press 1975
17. London, SPCK 1982
18. London, SCM 1964
19. op.cit. ch.8
20. op.cit. 25
21. JTC 6, 13
22. Morris, op.cit. 20 ; so also Koch, 20; G. Ebeling, JTC 6, 52.
23. Morris, ibid, 20
24. ibid. 34ff
25. Koch, op.cit. 24ff
26. See also M. Rist, IBS, Vol 1, 157, art. "Apocalyptic"; D.S. Russell, Method, 105; G.E. Ladd, ISBE, Vol 1, (Eerdmans, 1979), 151ff
27. P.D. Hanson, op.cit. 6: "no given apocalyptic work comes close to incorporating all the listed features"; Travis, op.cit., 28 asks how many of these features need to have to be classified as apocalyptic & whether some characteristics are more fundamental than others.
29. Rowland, op.cit. 21
30. T. Longman, West. Theo. Journal, Spring 1983, No 1, Vol XLV, 179f
31. Travis, op. 27ff
32. Koch, op.cit. 21
33. Rowland, op.cit. 208
34. Note also that with a generation of earlier scholars a different origin was claimed eg Charles, op.cit. viiff; H.H. Rowley, The Relevance of Apocalyptic, 15, (London 1944): "that apocalyptic is a child of prophecy, yet diverse from prophecy, can hardly be disputed"; cf also Russell, Method, 91: Prophecy is "the stuff from which apocalyptic is made"; cf also S.B. Frost, OT Apocalyptic, (London 1952), 83.
35. M. Rist, op.cit. 157; cf H. Conzelmann, An Outline of the Theology of the NT, (ET, SCM 1969), 23
36. Travis, op.cit. 29
37. J.C. Baldwin, Daniel (IVP), 48f; cf also D.F. Payne, "The Place of Daniel in OT Eschatology", Themelios 4, 1967, 33-40
38. N. Smart, The Religious Experience of Mankind (Fontana, 1971) 304ff claims the Avesta may be as late as the fourth century AD: cf S.B. Frost, op.cit. 187 states that the Dinkart is a work of the ninth century AD; J.H. Moulton (HDB IV), Art. "Zoroastrianism" maintains that it is more likely to be indebted to the Bible than the other way round."

9. H.D. Betz, op.cit. 155
10. A.Y. Collins, CBQ, Vol 39 1977, 367-381
1. M. Hengel, Judaism and Hellenism, Vol 1 (London, 1974) 181-194; Hengel presents numerous Hellenistic parallels to apocalyptic themes but believes that Hellenists influenced the apocalyptists only in matters of detail but not in their basic faith.
2. P.D. Hanson, op.cit; also "Jewish Apocalyptic against its Near Eastern environment", RB 78, 1971, 31-58; "OT Apocalyptic re-examined", Interpretation 25, 1971, 454-79; "Zechariah 9 and the recapitulation of an ancient ritual pattern", JBL 92, 1973, 37-59.
3. R.J. Bauckham, "The Rise of Apocalyptic", Themelios 3.2, 10-12
4. Von Rad, OT Theology, 2 (ET Edinburgh 1965), 306-308; the discussion is expanded in the fourth German edition (Munich 1965).
5. Cf Van Rad's predecessor in Heidelberg, G. Hölischer in "Die Entstehung des Buches Daniel", Th. Stud.u. Kritiken 1919, 113-119.
6. Koch, op.cit. 45; Baldwin, op.cit. 50; Rowland, op.cit, 203 and Travis, op.cit. 30.
7. Koch, ibid, 45
8. ibid 46
9. Cf Bauckham, op.cit, 13ff where he suggests Mantic wisdom affected the form of the apocalypticist's work but the content was inspired by OT prophecy.
10. ibid, 21
11. Russell, Method, 28; Von Rad, op.cit. 327
12. O. Eissfeldt, The OT: an Introduction, 1965, 524; Russell, Method, suggests people who reached Palestine from Mesopotamia during the Maccabean rebellion, 19; cf J.J. D.N. Freedman, "The Flowering of Apocalyptic", JTC 6 173
13. Hanson, Int. 25 474
14. Hengel, op.cit. 181ff
15. ibid, 206
16. op.cit. 52
17. F.M. Cross op.cit. 161: "The origins of apocalyptic must be searched for as early as the sixth century BC ...In this late exilic and early post-exilic literature we detect the rudimentary traits and motives of apocalypticism."
18. Hanson, RB, 33
19. op.cit. 32
20. Russell, Method, 27
21. Rowland, Open Heaven, 212; he later demonstrates that apocalyptic influenced even Rabbinic thought.
22. Koch, op.cit. 36 writes: "The heritage of 18th century Biblical scholarship has burdened us with a mortgage in the apocalyptic sphere" and outlines the theory of the prophetic connection: "After a decline of five hundred years, Jesus of Nazareth - perhaps John the Baptist before him - picked up the thread of the great prophets, the series of which ended with Deutero-Isaiah," 37.
23. Thus for Hanson the transcendent eschatology of apocalyptic prophecy is "myth", not merely in a literary sense, but in a sense akin to Bultmann's.
24. op.cit. final chapter.
25. Von Rad, op.cit. Vol 2, 303ff
26. Bauckham, op.cit. 19-23
27. ibid, 19
28. Koch, op.cit. 57
29. Cf. J.D.G. Dunn, Unity and Diversity in the NT, (London 1977), 318-22
30. Indebted to Travis for this summary of W.G. Rollins, NTS 17, 1970-71, 454ff
31. E. Käsemann, "The Beginnings of Christian Theology", JTC 6, 40
32. Travis reminds us that on this ground G.R. Beasley-Murray is able to defend the book of Revelation as a Christian book: cf "How Christian is the Book of Revelation?", in R.J. Banks (ed.), Reconciliation and Hope, L. Morris Festschrift, (Exeter 1974), 275-284.
33. op.cit. 131

From Deissmann's 'Light from the Ancient East' and C.K. Barret's 'The New Testament Background Selected Documents' it is possible to choose thirty eight papyrus letters with whose prescripts those of the Pauline letters may be compared.

In a number of the letters the prescript gives no information about the sender or the recipient other than their names. Thus we have in a letter dated 245 B.C., 'Demophon to Ptolemaeus greeting'. Of course, since such letters, in the absence of a postal service, would often be carried by friends, acquaintances, or employees, any additional information the receiver might need to enable him to identify the sender could be supplied by the bearer. We are not concerned with the measures taken to ensure that the bearer delivered the letter to the correct person!

Although in personal correspondence something was often added to the names as, for example, 'Mnesiergus sendeth to them that are at his house', 'Hilarion to Alis his sister', 'Mystarion to his own Stotoetis many greetings', such additions are no more remarkable than the expressions of ties of kinship and affection in correspondence of our own time.

Among the papyri we have chosen are some more formal letters and, not surprisingly, in most of these the sender identifies himself by giving the name of his father, sometimes also the name of his mother, and whatever rank or office he may hold. A good example of this is a letter of 50 A.D. from a village priest which reads, 'To Arius, son of Lysimachus, cogrammateus of Tebtunis, from Psoiphis, son of Harpocras son of Pakebkis, his mother being Thenmarsisuchus daughter of Psoithis and Kellanthis, inhabitants of the village, priest of the fifth tribe of the gods at the village'.

There are fourteen of these formal letters and in all but two of them the sender gives in the prescript more than just his name. In one of the two an elaborate identification is given later in the letter when the sender writes that he is thirty five years old and has a scar on the little finger of his right hand. In the

second letter, which was addressed to King Ptolemy, and to which I will turn again a little later, no more information than the name was necessary, not only because the bearer could supply it, but also because there was with it a letter to an official at the court of the king, and both letters referred to a collection of animals which were being sent to the king by the writer. There could have been no doubts about the identity of this writer.

The form of the prescripts shows more variety than one might suppose from reading what is said in some books in the New Testament. Thus, R.H. Fuller in his 'Critical Introduction to the New Testament' writes, 'The ancient letter began, 'A to B greetings' with the writer's name in the nominative and the recipient's name in the dative'. F.F. Bruce, in his commentary on Galatians, writes 'Letters in Near Eastern antiquity were regularly introduced by the formula 'X to Y greetings'', and Barrett in his commentary on Corinthians writes, 'As in every epistle, Paul uses the conventional Greek letter formula, A to B greetings'.

Admittedly such qualifications as Bruce's 'were regularly introduced' suggest that there were exceptions to the A and B formula, but they hardly prepare one for finding that out of thirty eight letters, fifteen, or nearly forty percent, should have the form 'To B from A' and not 'A to B'.

Cranfield, on Romans, is more informative than most commentators. He refers to the ancient western Asiatic style of prescript in which the recipient was often mentioned before the sender and, in a footnote, cites 2 Maccabees 1:1 'To their Jewish kinsmen in Egypt, the Jews who are in Jerusalem and those in the country of Judaea send brotherly greeting'. He also refers to the work of R.H. Pfeiffer on Assyrian epistolary formulae in which there is given as a typical official formula, 'To the King, my Lord! May Ahu and Marduk bless the King, my lord!' Cranfield refers also to Lohmeyer who argues that it was on this eastern Asiatic rather than on the Greek convention

that the Pauline prescripts are based, on the grounds that in the letters of Paul the salutation proper invariably stands as an independent sentence, and this makes possible another feature of the western Asiatic style, namely the use of first and second person pronouns in the salutation. Nevertheless, Cranfield's view is that it is the Greek which has determined Paul's style because the first part of the Pauline formula follows the form of the Greek prescript exactly, with the sender's name in the nominative followed by the recipient's in the dative. He argues that the fact that Paul used his Roman name and not his Jewish name 'Saul' suggests that he would be likely, at any rate writing as the apostle of the Gentiles to Gentiles, or to a church including a large number of Gentiles, to follow or adapt Greek rather than Jewish convention in a matter of external form of this sort.

The term 'western Asiatic' is of doubtful merit: it seems to be understood as an ethnic term, almost as the equivalent of Semitic. But while it might be reasonable to suggest that Paul, despite being a Jew, would use the Greek rather than the Semitic form, this would hardly apply to James or to the author of the Apocalypse, but both follow the Greek pattern of A to B. If, on the other hand, 'western Asiatic' is to be understood in a geographic sense, it suggests distinctions between, say, Troas and Thessalonica which may not have featured largely in the minds of the inhabitants of those cities in the 1st century A.D., and it leaves a question mark against the way to classify letters from Egypt and other places in N. Africa. The term can hardly be understood in a cultural sense. Yet, however imprecise the term may be, the discussions in which it is used prepare us for a greater variety of styles among the prescripts of the papyri than some works have suggested.

Turning again to the letters in Deissmann and Barrett, we find that the usual form in correspondence within a family is A to B, expanded in some cases with terms of relationship and affection. Many of the more official letters, however, take the form 'To B from A', and usually the rank or status of the sender and the recipient are given. Some of these official letters,

however take the form 'A to B', as, for example, a letter of 111 B.C., which announces the government determined price of myrrh, and reads 'Appollonius to the epistatae in the division of Polemon and to the other officials greeting'. In so far as the limited number of letters under examination permit us to generalize, it seems that when a favour is being asked, or a letter, whether formal or informal is addressed from an inferior to his superior, or when courtesy suggests that the receiver should be addressed as was proper in acknowledging superior rank, the preferred form is 'To B from A'.

We referred earlier to a letter to King Ptolemy which was accompanied by one to a court officer (actually the Egyptian Minister of Finance). The sender, a Sheikh of the Ammonites, did not need to give more than his name for identification, and his letter to the Minister simply began, 'Tubias to Apollonius greeting', but the accompanying letter took the form, 'To King Ptolemy from Tubias'. No favour was being requested in either letter, and it seems that only the courteous recognition of the King's rank determined the change in form.

Similarly in a letter of the 2nd century A.D., to a superior, we have 'To Julius Domitius, military tribune of the legion, from Aurelius Archelaus his beneficiarius, greeting'. So also a letter asking a favour (the building of a temple to Serapis) reads, 'To Apollonius, greeting from Zoilus the Aspendian, priest of Serapis'.

One letter, reminiscent of Paul's letter to Philemon is, on that account, worth quoting in full. It reads 'To my master and beloved brother Abinneus the Praepositus - Caor, Papas of Hermupolis, greeting. I salute thy children much. I would have thee know, lord, concerning Paul the soldier, concerning his flight: pardon him this once, seeing that I am without leisure to come unto thee at this present. And, if he slacken not, he will come again into thy hands another time. Fare thee well, I pray, many years, my lord brother.'

When we compare this letter asking for the pardon of a soldier who had fled with Paul's letter asking Philemon

to receive back the runaway slave, we note that despite the similar tone and the nature of the request there is a difference in the form of the prescript. If we omit from Paul's letter the references to the others associated with him or with Philemon, we have, 'Paul, a prisoner for Jesus Christ, to Philemon our beloved fellow worker: Grace to you and peace.'

The style which Paul adopts of 'A to B' is like that of most of the personal and family letters, but it is also like those formal letters which are obviously from the one who is in authority, such as, for example, 'Apollonius to the epistatatae in the division of Polemon'.

We find, moreover, that although it was obviously unnecessary for Paul to identify himself in any way, he states his relationship with Christ Jesus, as he does in every epistle save those to the Thessalonians. We shall come back to the Thessalonian letters so, for the moment, we shall take the opening words of 1 Corinthians as characteristic of Paul's style. If we leave out the reference to Sosthenes, and the description of the church as those sanctified etc., we have, 'Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, to the church of God which is at Corinth: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.'

Although there is a world of difference between Paul's office and that of the Emperor, the prescript which most closely resembles Paul's in form is that which reads, 'Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus Imperator, Pontifex Maximus, holder of the tribunician power, consul designate, to the city of Alexandria, greeting.'

I used to suppose that it was the theological content of Paul's letters which the Corinthians regarded as weightier than his speech. John Wesley's sermons are required reading for all candidates for the ministry of the Methodist church, and many of us must have wondered how he could have moved crowds of people if these printed sermons were fair samples of his preaching, and concluded that he must have had an altogether lighter touch when he was speaking! Perhaps this was also true

of Paul. But Paul himself is not conscious of having preached anything other than the full gospel, and writes to the Galatians that there is not another gospel than that which he preached. The contrast which the Corinthians found between Paul's speech and his letters may, therefore, have been prompted by the style rather than the content of his letters, and perhaps, in particular, by the form of the prescript. 'His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account' 2 Cor.10:10.

I have already mentioned that the prescripts of the letters to the Thessalonians differ from those of the rest of Paul's letters. The words of 1 Thess. which are substantially the same as those of 2 Thess. are, 'Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace'. The difference between this and the prescripts of the other Pauline letters has long been recognised. As long ago as 1908 Milligan wrote, in his commentary on the letters to the Thessalonians, 'In neither of the Thessalonian epistles, nor in the epistle to the Philippians does St. Paul add, as elsewhere, his official title Apostolos, doubtless owing to the special footing of friendship on which he stood to the Macedonian churches, and to the fact that his authority had never been seriously questioned among them'. Similarly, Lightfoot in his commentary on Philippians wrote, 'The official title of Apostle is omitted here, as in the Epp to the Thessalonians. In writing to the Macedonian churches, with which his relations were so close and affectionate St. Paul would feel an appeal to his authority to be unnecessary. The same omission is found in the letter to Philemon and must be similarly explained.' It is clear, however that the absence of the word apostle from the prescript was not because Paul's affection for the Macedonian churches was so great that the felt that an appeal to his authority was unnecessary or inappropriate. On the contrary he writes, 'nor did we seek glory from men, whether from you or from others, though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ'

1 Thess. 2:6, and there is also the very strong 'I adjure you by the lord, that this letter be read to all the brethern' 1 Thess 5:27.

We note that not only does Paul not describe himself in the prescripts to the Thessalonians as an apostle, he does not there mention any relationship with Christ, and that when, in the body of the letter, he does write of apostles of Christ (1 Thess. 2:6) he includes Silvanus and Timothy. The comments of Milligan and Lightfoot that in writing to the Macedonian churches Paul did not find it necessary to describe himself as an apostle, so lumping together Thessalonians and Philippians, obscures the fact that in Philippians (as indeed in Philemon) a relationship with Christ is expressed. The Thessalonian correspondence is unique in having no relationship with Christ expressed in the prescripts.

Paul describes some people as apostles who are not always recognised as such, for example, Andronicus and Junias (or Junia). What is remarkable about his use of the term in Thessalonians is not that he counts Silvanus and Timothy as apostles, but that he calls them apostles of Christ. In his other letters, even when he includes others with himself in the prescript, he distinguishes between himself as an apostle of Christ and the others who are associated with him in the sending of the letter. Thus, in 2 Corinthians, where significantly we find in the prescript the name of Timothy who, as we have seen, is in 1 Thess 2:6 an apostle of Christ, we read 'Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother.' Exactly the same words are found in Colossians. In 1 Corinthians the distinction is between Paul called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus and our brother Sosthenes.

E. Best suggests, in his commentary on 1 Thessalonians, that, at the time of writing Paul may not have formulated fully his own position as an apostle as he did later, and therefore may have been able to consider Silvanus and Timothy as apostles alongside himself. This suggestion would put the Thessalonian correspondence earlier than any of the letters in which Paul is clear about the nature

of his apostleship.

There is, of course, general agreement that 1st Thessalonians is one of the earliest of Paul's letters, but there are a number of scholars who regard it as later than Galatians. Among these are F.F. Bruce and R.P. Martin, while Ridderbos in espousing the South Galatian hypothesis writes, 'The letter would then be among the first, if not actually the first of the letters of Paul preserved for us. This is the judgment also of Zahn in his *Einleitung*.' The question of the earliest of Paul's letters cannot be decided merely by looking at the prescripts, but the form of the prescripts is one factor to be borne in mind. We can most easily account for the form of the prescripts by assuming that the earliest letter's prescript is closest to the usual pattern shown by the letters of that time. This means that the prescripts which express office or status are likely to be later than 1 Thessalonians which, in this respect, is nearer to the usual pattern of contemporary correspondence.

We suggest that from the beginning Paul was conscious of his apostleship, but did not refer to it in the prescripts of letters written before his position was challenged. Once the challenge had been made he made his position clear at the very beginning of his letters by stating his relationship with Christ. This pattern persisted even when the term servant or prisoner was used instead of apostle. And this pattern was followed, in the main, by the canonical writers who came after Paul. We find it not only in the Deutero-Pauline works, with the exception of Hebrews which has no prescript at all, but we find it also in James, 1 and 2 Peter, and Jude.

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Bernhard Lang (Ed), Anthropological Approaches to the Old Testament
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175 pp

Each book in this series seeks for a given subject to collect and reproduce "key studies, all previously published, which have contributed significantly to our present understandings" (p ix). It is also part of the purpose of the series to concentrate on material to which the biblical student might not otherwise have easy access. In this present collection of essays, Lang confines himself to those which "reflect biblical research done by professional anthropologists, and, to a lesser extent, research by biblical scholars involved with anthropological study" (p 3). This of course means that the selection does not include extracts from the "classics" of Old Testament Anthropology (such as HW Wolff's Anthropology of the Old Testament), which are presumably readily available elsewhere. However, Lang does present us with a most stimulating collection of essays. in which the skills, insights, and theories of the secular anthropologists are related to biblical studies.

Lang's own introductory chapter includes a brief but helpful historical survey of the interrelation of secular anthropology and biblical studies, from the time of William Robertson Smith's Lectures on the Religion of the Semites (2n edn, 1894) and Sir James Frazer's Folklore in the Old Testament (1918), to the present day. Technical terms and phrases, such as "participant observation", "comparative ethnography", and "structuralism" are explained. For each of the essays which follow, Lang indicates its place in the historical development, and the school of thought to which it belongs.

The first five essays in the selection belong to the realm of "comparative ethnography". Franz Steiner ("Enslavement and the Early Hebrew Lineage System") (1954), and Isaac Schapera ("The Sin of Cain") (1955) represent attempts to use comparisons with primitive African societies to elucidate particular points of Old Testament study (the Joseph/Jacob relationship in Genesis 47-48 in the former, and, in the latter, Cain's protection by God after the murder of Abel). Schapera's

case in particular is not altogether convincing. The African situations are perhaps not 100% parallel to the Genesis situation; and indeed Schapera himself admits at one point that "the relative scarcity of recorded case histories makes generalisations hazardous".

A particularly valuable essay, however, in this first group, is John W Rogerson's "The Hebrew Conception of Corporate Personality: A Re-examination" (1970). The phrase 'corporate personality' had become a commonplace of Old Testament literature. Rogerson shows, however, that from the outset there was a serious ambiguity in Robinson's use of the phrase; and he ably demonstrates how this ambiguity enabled later scholars "to make use of a theory in a way for which it was never really suited" (p 44). In particular Rogerson takes to task the view that "in primitive society a man had no consciousness that he was an individual" (p 45), or that "the primitive was not aware as we are today of the limits of his own personality" (p 47). He goes on to show that the use of the phrase by, for example, AR Johnson, and DS Russell is often based on anthropological theories (such as those of Levy-Bruhl) which would scarcely receive much recognition from professional anthropologists today. Thus Rogerson's critique of the use of the phrase 'corporate personality' is forceful and persuasive, and one which should be noted by all scholars who are tempted to fall back on the notion of corporate personality to get themselves out of difficulties of interpretation. I would wholly concur with Rogerson when he says: "... it would be best to drop the term corporate personality completely, and at the same time to abandon any attempt to explain Old Testament phenomena in terms of primitive mentality" (p 55).

The remaining two essays of the first group are, firstly, a most interesting study by Thos. Overholt (1982) of some of the problems of cross-cultural comparison, including a detailed comparison of the prophetic activity (as distinct from the message) of the prophet Jeremiah with that of an early 19th century North American Indian "prophet"; and, then, a most illuminating application by Lang himself of the insights of modern economic-anthropological insights to the situation of the Book of Amos.

The second group of (two) essays consists of attempts to throw light on the dietary laws of the Book of Leviticus and to find a

theory which will serve as a comprehensive explanation of those food laws. The essays are by Mary Douglas (1966) and Michael P Carroll (1978). While both have much to contribute to the discussion, it is perhaps not surprising that neither really succeeds any more than those who have gone before in producing a convincingly all-embracing theory.

Finally Lang offers us three essays illustrative of the "structuralist" school, an approach associated originally with Levi-Strauss (based on linguistic analogy, and seeking to deduce the "elementary structures" or "models" that make up the basic "grammar" of (for example) kinship systems, myths, and rituals). Lang observes: "Since structural readings of texts are often as complicated as they are controversial, this collection only includes papers which can be read and appreciated by even the uninitiated." We have, then, in Michael Carroll's "Genesis Restructured" an introduction to the rules of transformation by which one can "translate" one myth into another, or analyse inverted structures in a single story. Two articles, one by Edmund Leach, and the other by Douglas Davies, apply the structuralists' methods to the Levitical sacrificial system, in particular the Day of Atonement. These methods of course have their own contribution to make; but they are suspect when they begin to assume or suggest that their structures or "models" can "represent the architecture of the human mind" (p 12). Lang points out that elsewhere Leach admits himself that structural analysis can in fact be neither verified nor disproved (p 13).

This collection of essays, then, will serve as a valuable introduction to those who are interested in how the techniques and principles of professional anthropology might be applied to Old Testament study; and those who wish to delve more deeply into the subject will find a most comprehensive bibliography.

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This book, by a parish-based Anglican theologian who has already published The Church in the Theology of the Reformers and written articles on Luther, natural theology, polarity, and the theology of Charles Gore, is essentially a radical critique of ARCIC I. It goes further, however, in that it attempts to lay down guidelines for a specifically Anglican ecumenical theology. In effect the author is saying, "What is the good of reaching agreement between Anglican and Roman Catholic theologians - as ARCIC I does - on theological issues like the eucharist, if in fact the really divisive factors between these two traditions are not doctrinal at all, but relate to their "ultimate assumptions" (xii), especially in the area of authoritative teaching (the magisterium)?"

He goes on to contrast the "ultimate assumptions" of the two traditions as he sees them (his models on the Anglican side being the Cambridge Platonists, Joseph Butler, Coleridge, Maurice, Temple and Ramsay). The "propositional" understanding of truth (Roman Catholic) is contrasted with "personal" understanding; inference with intuition; the analytic approach with the "fiduciary"; infallibility and inerrancy with "adequacy"; overweening (as he understands it) institutional certainty with the more modest "probability" which can yet be regarded as "moral certainty" (Butler, p.56). His conclusion (pace ARCIC!) is that "the doctrine of infallibility and its concomitants ought to be deleted from the agenda of doctrines essential as a platform for unity between the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches, and some form or degree of unity ought to be pursued that does not depend on agreement on this point" (p.59). Few members of Churches stemming from the Reformation would dispute this.

An interesting section on the "reception" of doctrinal statements as involving the assent of the "mind of the Church" (consensus fidelium) points to the Roman Catholic Church's difficulty in distinguishing between a "permanent consensus" (e.g. on contraception) with the actual "mind of the Church" at a particular time. Humanae Vitae 1968, for example, appears to have elevated a "permanent consensus" over the "mind of the Church" at the time (p.69), so indicating that "reception" tends ultimately to mean the acceptance by the Church of the infallible teaching of the magisterium. Avies the Anglican cannot accept this way of looking at things. There must, he says, be "criticism at the heart of theology" (73), and the possibility of radical dissent in each tradition (77). Infallibility - whether of Scripture or of authority - is felt to be inconsistent with the Anglican view of "adequacy" and of "dispersed authority" (79).

Is it then possible for the Anglican Church - with its inbuilt pluralism and comprehensiveness - to become a model or pilot-scheme for a future united Church (80)? Avis believes that it is. The Church is a fallible, a sinning Church (98ff). Yet it is also indefectible: not through any perfection in itself, but simply because it is the agent of the Gospel of salvation, and so God will not let it go. An indefectibility based (so Tillard) on the primacy of a particular local Church (Rome) "substitutes an historical and empirical concept of indefectibility for

the true spiritual and eschatological belief in the indestructibility of the Church as the agent of the Gospel" (109). The Anglican concept of indefectibility is consistent with a positive pluralism which can sustain "complementary truths held in tension" (123).

What is the basis for unity on such a view? It lies, Avis suggests, in the "tacit dimension", that area of common understanding, common feeling, common life which Christians of different traditions already experience in their relations with each other, in a "tacit grammar of faith" which lies below the threshold of explicit theology (125). This leads him to ask the radical question, why the quest for unity should be spearheaded "by theologians sitting round a table comparing propositions" (128). That, for Avis, is putting the cart before the horse. The greatest need, he feels, is rather for the exploration of the unity which Christians already - in the tacit dimension - possess. Their longing is to share in the sacrament of unity, and so, he asserts, the immediate goal of ecumenism should be "to establish what the minimum requirements for inter-communion would be" (129). The book is a stimulating - and at times intentionally provocative - effort to outline the agenda of an Anglican ecumenical theology. A reviewer from the Reformed tradition finds in it much that is helpful, while yet being uncomfortably aware that the Roman Catholic and the Reformed traditions both - in their different ways - rely on "propositional" and confessional theology, and share a common bewilderment as they seek to come to terms with Anglican pluralism. The Reformed tradition would tend to seek the basis of unity neither in the authority of a universal primate, nor in the "tacit dimension" of the consensus fidelium, but rather in the constant exposition of, and obedience to the Word of God in Scripture, with all the implications of fallenness and fallibility which this implies, and which Avis so well describes. And an Irish reviewer cannot but mention the fact that the kolnonia of tacit understanding between Catholic and Protestant - which Avis assumes - is far from achievement in a situation where people are still reluctant to grant each other the name of Christian. But how right he is in his insistence that indefectibility is not something which inheres in the magisterium, nor - as some Protestants appear to believe - in the correctness of one's confessional orthodoxy, but rather is a way of describing God's honouring the Church's commitment to proclaim and live by the Gospel of salvation.

Two final points. First: following an insight of D.M. Kennedy incorporated in the Plan of Union of the Church of North India (1965) I should like to see the rather inadequate word "adequacy" replaced by the more Scriptural "sufficiency." In the North India union, the traditions - ministry, sacraments and Church polity - of the uniting Churches were not questioned or repudiated, since "our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor.3:5, hikanotes) (Preface p.viii). Over against all claims of infallibility for magisterium or confession we set the sufficiency with which God honours his Gospel. Second: this outline of an Anglican ecumenical theology is necessary and timely, in view not only of ARCIC but of all bilateral consultations. Does it not point forward, however, to the need for ecumenically written ecumenical theology, arising from within the tacitly experienced kolnonia of all the great traditions? Such a theology would, I believe, have many of the pluriform features to which Avis draws our attention in this book.

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